

GOVERNOR JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM

Friday, March 23, 2007

This is Governor Jennifer Granholm.

Next week, I'll be speaking at the annual Governor's Education Summit. The summit is a conversation with educators, business people and Michigan citizens about how we can ensure that our schools are helping all kids learn – and how educational success for our children translates into economic success for our state.

Education is so, so important – especially right now – because it truly is the key to revitalizing Michigan's economy. Experts across the country agree that investing in education is the single most effective strategy for stoking a state's economic growth. And that's why our schools and our kids are the foundation of our state's economic plan.

We've already come together to make a number of groundbreaking changes in Michigan – changes that raise the bar for Michigan students and ensure that our kids have the tools they need to succeed in the classroom and in life. We've implemented new standards for K-8 schools, and set in place new high school standards that are among the most rigorous in the nation. And, we created the Michigan Promise scholarship – \$4,000 that gives every single student in Michigan the opportunity to get technical training or attend college.

Why will these first steps pay off? Because the cutting-edge jobs that are coming to Michigan require a well-educated workforce. And these good-paying jobs will maintain Michigan's high quality of life, and keep our kids in Michigan.

While we've made great progress, there is still a lot of work to be done. That's why we need to kick our economic plan into overdrive, to redouble our efforts, particularly in education. This means expanding early education by making full day preschool available and requiring kindergarten for all Michigan kids. It means raising the drop-out age so we require all students to stay in school until they are 18 years old. It means continuing to make critical investments so that students and teachers alike have the tools to make sure that our classrooms breed success and deliver opportunity. We can't afford to cut funding for education at the very moment when we need it the most to be competitive in the future.

I've laid out a budget that is a blueprint to ensure that we can invest in our kids and our schools, as well as in diversifying our economy, training and retraining Michigan workers, and providing universal access to affordable health care.

But that means we need to act now, with real urgency, to solve our fiscal crisis. Working together, and investing in education, we can make sure that Michigan is the best place for us and our kids to live, learn and earn.

Thank you for listening.